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EXCISE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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HANDLING INDICATOR

ARR	REP	AF
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TO : Department of State

EO 11652: XGDS 2

TAGS: PINS, GT

MAY 17 8 34 AM 1974

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: 15 May, 74

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents, April 1974

REF :

SUMMARY: The dominant feature of this month's internal security picture was an unusually high number of Leftist terrorist attacks, including several relatively harmless bombings in the capital and Quezaltenango. The bombings reportedly were the work of FURD units, acting in an effort to create public disorder. In the countryside there also were scattered reports of violent Opposition reactions to election fraud. A number of murders of moderately prominent individuals may or may not have been politically motivated. Among the victims was Leonel Bojórquez, a former Detective Corps commander, whose assassination is likely to increase the already prevalent nervousness of security officials in command positions. The April total of 58 press-reported incidents of a possible political nature represented a return to the average monthly level of violence prevalent during 1973, following two months of sharp upward and downward fluctuations. Not counted in this month's total were eight common criminals slain by the Escuadron de la Muerte. END SUMMARY.

I. Statistics: The April total of 58 press-reported incidents of a possible political nature represented a return to the average monthly level of violence in 1973 (54) after the sharp upward and downward fluctuations of February (77) and March (42). Eleven incidents (19%), an unusually high number, were attributed by the press this month to Leftist subversive elements. Ten incidents (17%) appeared to be the work of Government security forces, and the remaining 64% were not readily attributable.

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(in draft)

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Statistics in April included 9 kidnappings and 28 assassinations, eight with reported signs of torture. Victims this month included four campesinos; one rancher; an engineer; a taxi driver; two Chilean businessmen resident here; two former detectives, including a former Detective Corps chief; and the Mayor-elect of a South Coast town. For the third month in succession, the Capital area led the nation's four regions in number of incidents (24), surpassing the usually front-running South Coast (19).

II. Leftist Terrorism: The dominant feature of this month's internal security picture was a resurgence of Leftist-initiated terrorist attacks. The total of eleven Leftist actions this month represents the highest number of monthly incidents attributed to that sector since October 1972, when the Left was judged responsible for 31 incidents. During all of 1973 we only attributed 38 incidents to the Left, a monthly average of 3.2. In 1972 and 1971, however, the level of Leftist violence was much higher, with the totals in some months approaching that for all of 1973.

Leftist actions last month consisted largely of minor bombings, representing a shift in tactics from the propaganda activity which has made up the great majority of Leftist-initiated incidents during the past year and a half. In Guatemala City bombs exploded on April 9 in the doorway of the Organized Aranjista Center (CAO) and the next day in the office building of the Registrar of Property. Earlier in the month a fragmentation grenade was thrown into the central police hospital. In Quezaltenango, incendiary bombs exploded in the local Coalition headquarters on April 2 and in the home of a Coalition Congressman-elect, Oscar Bonilla, on April 3. On April 28 the Mayor of Chimaltenango, an MLN member, found a time bomb in his home, allegedly only five minutes before it was set to explode. In all of these incidents property damage was light and no one was hurt. Leftist elements also appeared to have been responsible for wounding an Education Ministry employee attempting to paint over propaganda slogans and for sabotaging telephone lines in one zone of the capital.

Comment:

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III. Election Repercussions: There have been scattered reports from the countryside of violent Opposition reactions to election fraud and of heavy-handed efforts by Government Coalition elements to silence the Opposition. In Ocoas, San Marcos, the Mayor-elect, a local MLN leader, was shot by unknown assailants on April 12. Both Government and Opposition elements in San Marcos have told us that they suspect the slaying was the work of local Opposition elements, disgruntled with the blatant fraud employed to steal the Ocoas election from the DCG. Recent press reports indicate, however, that personal motives may also have been involved. In the South Coast town of El Palmar, Quezaltenango, campesinos have publicly charged that local authorities have arrested and beaten several residents for political reasons. Similar accusations have been made by DCG activists in San Gaspar Ixchil, Huehuetenango.

Comment: Considerable resentment is likely to be created in many areas as the Government-controlled Electoral Council announces Coalition victors in mayoral contests in which it is commonly believed that the Opposition Front in fact won. Additional cases of assassination are possible, particularly in violence-prone South Coast towns such as Ocoas. Emotions also are reportedly running high in some Chimaltenango towns where DCG-backed Indian mayoral candidates are convinced that the election has been stolen from them in order to place ladinos in office. End Comment.

IV. Unexplained Murders: During the month there were a number of slayings of moderately prominent individuals, which may or may not have been politically motivated. The greatest public attention was given to the assassination on April 26 of Leonel Bojórquez Gallardo, Chief of the National Police Detective Corps from September 1972 to March 1973. Unknown assailants, operating in two cars, gunned down Bojórquez shortly after he left the Cementos Novella factory, where he had worked as Chief of Security for the past two

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months. Other victims this month included two Chilean brothers who recently had established a foam rubber factory here and a Guatemalan civil engineer, Enrique Jongenzoom Martinez, who was shot while inspecting a project on the Reforma Boulevard.

Comment:

The existing extreme Leftist terrorist groups, always ready to capitalize on such cases as deserved executions of "revolutionary justice," have remained mum in the Bojórquez case. The assassination will undoubtedly contribute to the already prevalent nervousness of security officials in command positions, who rarely wish to remain in Guatemala upon relinquishing their posts and the physical protection which these posts provide. End Comment.

V. More "Death Squad" Slayings: The Escuadron de la Muerte felled eight more supposed common criminals this month, bringing to over 20 the number of victims since the clandestine group began its current campaign in February. All of the April victims were found shot, with signs of torture, and with Escuadron notes affixed to their bodies, usually enumerating the dead man's crimes. As usual, we have not included the Escuadron slayings in our monthly count, because the victims all are accused of common crimes rather than political activity. The Death Squad's activities do, however, have a political effect. Threats against journalists and Opposition politicians often are made in the name of the Escuadron and the threats' impact obviously is enhanced by the group's bloody reputation. During this year's Labor Day rally, labor leaders frequently cited the Escuadron as a symbol of political repression and openly identified it as an arm of the National Police.

MELOY

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EXEMPT FROM GDS OF EO 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2)

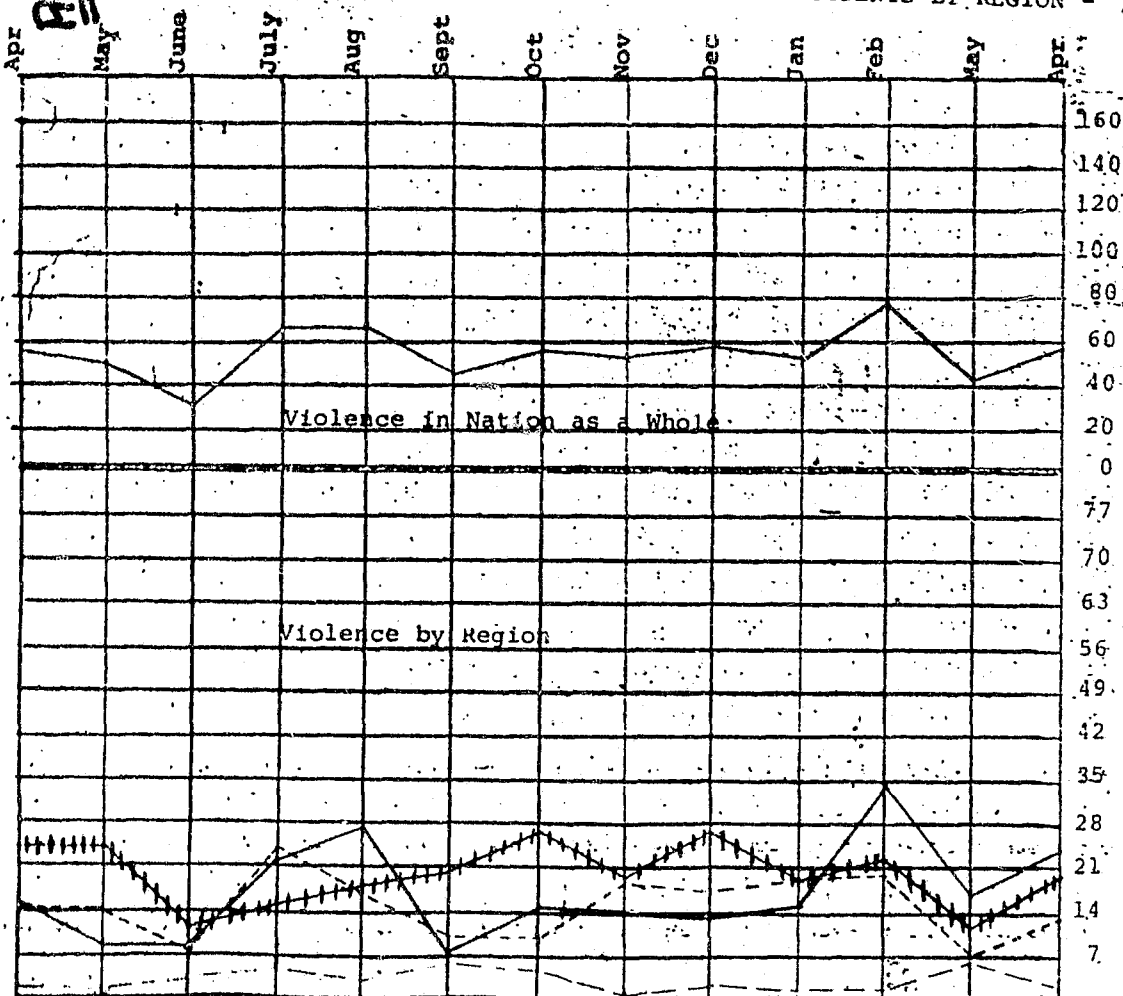
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Guatemala

MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL INCIDENTS BY REGION - APRIL 1973 - APRIL 1974



TOTAL 58

For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and deaths, all of which appear to be politically motivated.

Capital area - Sacatepequez, Guatemala

South Coast - San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa

Eastern Region - Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquirula, Izabal, El Peten

Highlands - Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola